



OST 2005-20127-360

THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
DOCKETS

MAY 17 2005

2005 MAY 20 P 3:11

The Honorable John W. Warner  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-4601

*John*  
Dear Senator Warner:

Thank you for your letter of April 26 supporting the proposal of the Roanoke Regional Airport Community Consortium for Improved Air Service and the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission in Roanoke, Virginia, for a grant under the Small Community Air Service Development Program (Small Community Program).

The Small Community Program was established to help smaller communities address air service deficiencies, particularly issues related to high airfares and insufficient service. Congress appropriated \$20 million for grant awards under this program in fiscal year 2005. Under the statute, the U.S. Department of Transportation may use the funds to make a maximum of 40 grant awards each year, although no more than four may be to the same state. In order to provide communities latitude in developing solutions to their air service problems, the statute provides significant flexibility in how the financial assistance may be used.

On January 19, the Department issued an order requesting that communities interested in receiving a grant this year file their applications by April 22. The Roanoke proposal is one of the many proposals submitted by the filing deadline. As these grant requests are pending before the Department, I am sure you understand that I cannot comment on the merits of any particular proposal. I assure you, however, that the Department will give full consideration to all proposals that have been filed.

As is our normal practice, I am placing a copy of your letter and this response in Docket OST-2005-20127 as a contact outside the record of this matter. I appreciate your interest in this program.

Sincerely yours,

Norman Y. Mineta

JOHN WARNER  
VIRGINIA

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## United States Senate

April 26, 2005

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The Honorable Norman Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation  
US Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: OST-2005-20127

Dear Mr. Secretary:

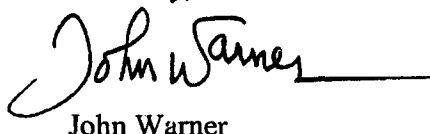
I am pleased to be writing in support of the Roanoke Regional Airport Community Consortium for Improved Air Service ("Consortium") and the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission's ("Commission") application for funds from the Small Community Air Service Development Program. The Airport is seeking \$750,000 to improve air service choices available to the residents of Roanoke and the surrounding community.

As I am sure you are aware, Roanoke Regional Airport ("ROA") serves a primary catchment area of with a population of over 590,000 residents that includes 19 colleges and universities, including Virginia Tech, one of the nation's leading research universities. Recently, the Consortium and the Commission have identified two major air service deficiencies which hinder economic development. The first is poor access to Florida and the second is limited access to the Northeast as a result of the pull-down of the USAirways connecting hub at Pittsburgh. The Consortium and Commission seek to address these deficiencies through this grant. In a proactive move, the Commission has made contact with targeted carriers regarding opportunities in these areas of the market and these carries have indicated a willingness to work with the Commission. This grant would assist in the further exploration of these opportunities with an eye towards addressing these deficiencies. I support this project and commend the Consortium and Commission for their initiative.

Based on a review of this proposal by my staff, and their track record for outstanding community service and frugal expenditure of funds, it appears that the Consortium and the Commission are exceptionally qualified to be a recipients of this funding. Accordingly, I commend their efforts and respectfully urge that the Department of Transportation give careful and thorough consideration to this application, within the rules, regulations and statutes governing grant decisions.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,



John Warner

JW/spr